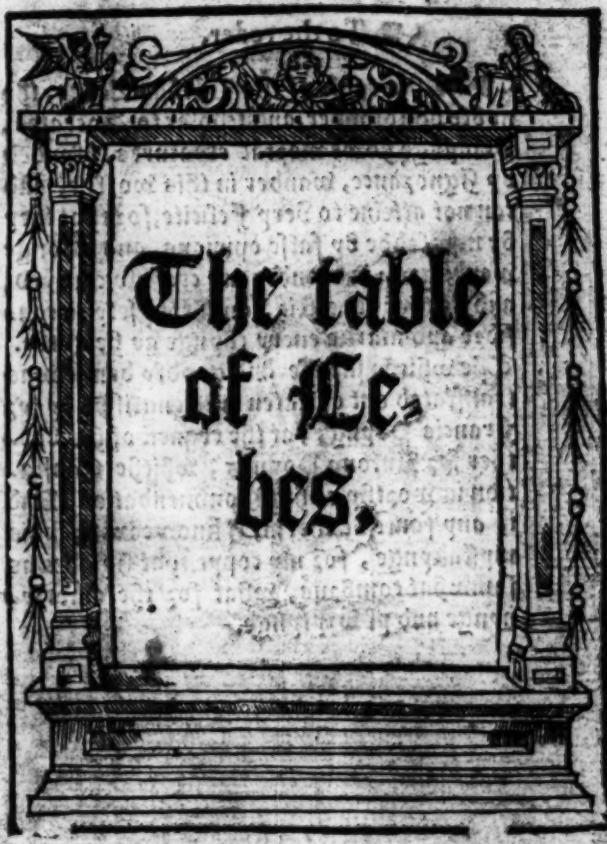
The table
of Le-
bes,

To the reder.

This table of the Theban Cebes, the noble philosopher, and scholer to Socrates, sheweynge howe mortal creatures, blynded by Ignorance, wander in this worlde, and can not attaine to very felicite, for that they be mysledde by false opinions, and wronge weynynges: is wonderous craftily cõueyed, and he that redeth it, ought wysely to consider and marke euery thynge as he gothe. The whiche subtile and goodly deuise was translated out of laten in to englisshe by syr Francis Poyngz, at the requeste of his brother syr Antony Poyngz, whiche translation is worthy of high commendation. And if any faute be therin, I knowe well, yit is mystakynge, for my coppe that I had was somwhat combrus, what for the enterlynynge and pl wrytynge.

1891
C2.E5
1530a

¶ The table of Cebes.

IT chanced vs to walke in the temple of Saturne, where amonge many other gyftes and oblations, that we sawe, a table was hanged vppe, for an offrynge. In the whiche was a picture very strange / conteynyng in it certeine fables and stories. The whiche we conde nother coniecte wher of they were, nor of what tyme they were. For that that was peynted, nother semed to vs to be a citie, nor a fortresse: but there was in it one great circle or compas / conteynyng within it two other circles, the one more / and the other lesse. There was also a gate in the fyrst circle, and in the gate there semed to vs a great cõpany to stande: And within the closure there appered a multitude of women. In the entrynge of the fyrste porche and circute there stode an olde man, whiche semed as though he cõmanded somwhat to the company, that entered in.

A fatherly man standing by vs, and seinge vs muse and doubte of this picture longe tyme amonge our selfes, sayde vnto vs: You straungers be nat ashamed, though ye

doubte what this picture is. For there be many, that dwelle in this citie, that wote full litell/what the inuention of this table betoketh. For, for to say trouth, none of this Citie offred it, but a certayne straunger in tyme paste came hither, a wyse man and a noble philosopher, folowyng both in worde and dede the lyfe of Pythagoras and Parmenides: who dyd bothe builde this tẽple in the honour of Saturne / & also dyd offre vp to the same this picture. Dyd you euer, sayde I, knowe that same man by syghte? Yea, sayde he, and had hym longe tyme in great reuerence. For all be hit he was but yonge, yet dyd he debate, and dispute, many thinges cõunyngly. And I haue herde hym talkyng oftẽ of the inuẽtion of this picture. For goddis sake than, quod I, excepte ye haue some other great busynes, declare it vnto vs. For we greatly coueyte to knowe, what this fable signifieth. With good wyll frendes, quod he, but ye muste vnderstande/ that the declaration of it is perillous. How so (quod I) For, quod he, if ye attentifly herken and vnderstande/that that is sayde/ ye shall be bothe wyse and happy. If ye do nat/ye shalbe made both vnwyse, vnhappy, beuy/and rude/and leade al your lyfe after

mise-

miſerably. For this take is lyke the riddell of Spinx / that ſhe purpoſed to folke: the which if any body vnderſtode, he was ſafe, if he vnderſtode it not, he was ſlayne of Spinx. The ſame maner is in this take. For foly is to men a Spinx. And ſhe alſo purpoſeth to folke / what is good, what is yll, what is nat good, what is nat yl in this lyfe. Theſe thynges excepte a man vnderſtande, he is ſlaine of foly: But nat vtterly, as he that is deuoured of Spinx, but a litel and a litell in all the holle lyfe is conſumed, lyke as they that be deliuered cōtinually to be turmēted. But if a man vnderſtāde theſe thinges cōtrariwiſe, foly is loſt, the mā is ſaued & made bliſfull & happy al his lyfe after. Wherfore attende ye diligently and mishere me nat. O good lorde, in to what a gredye deſire haſt thou brought vs, if thoſe thinges be as thou ſayſte? And I, quod he, enſure you they be ſo. Welt thou ſalte nat preuent vs in tellyng: For we wyl herken diligēly, ſeinge the penaltie is ſuche.

He toke than a rodde, and poynted to the picture. Se you nat, quod he, this circute? we ſe it. This ye muſte fyrſte knowe, that this place is called lyfe: And the great cōpany, that ſtandeth before the dore, be thoſe

that ſhall entre in to lyfe. The olde man / that ſtandeth aboue / hauyng in his one hãde a paper / and with the other / as it were ſwynge ſomewhat, is called Genius, The which betokeneth here / that that we cal oure goode Angell. he cõmandeth the entrers, what they muſte do, if they wyl be kept ſafe in the lyfe. what way doth he byd them go / and howe, q J ? Seeſt thou nat, quod he, harde by the gate, a certayne ſeate, ſette in the place, where the great company entreth: in the whiche there ſitteth a woman goodly of maners / with a fayre lurynge countinance / and hauynge in hir hande a cuppe ? J ſe hir, but what is ſhe, quod J ? She is called Diſceyte, quod he, myſleder of al folke. Than what doth ſhe ? She compelleth them / that come in to the lyfe / to drynke as mocke of hir cuppe as ſhe can. what drynke ? Jt is, q he, errour and ignoraunce. what than ? whan they haue dronke that drynke they entre in to lyfe: whether than do all folke drynke errour or no ? All drynke, quod he, but ſome more / ſome leſſe. Farthermore ſeeſt thou nat with in the gate a great ſorte of women, hauyng dyuers horiſſhe tatches ? J ſe them. Thoſe be called opinions, deſires, and luſtes. As ſone as the company entrethe / thoſe leape forthe and embrace euery one of them, and after

afterwarde conueye them awaye. Whither do they bringe them? Some bringe them, quod he, to sauegarde, & some to destruction by Disceite. O marueylous god, what a strange dryncke tellest thou of. But al these forsayde women, quod he, do promyse / as though they wolde leade the entrers to the best thynges / and also to a lyfe happy, profitable / and commodious: the entrers than throughe the Ignorannce and Errour / that they dronke by Deceite, can not finde, which is the trewe way in the lyfe / but wandre vn aduisedly: as thou seest them that came in fyrste / the whiche seme to wandre thyther / as those women poynt them. I se that, q I, but that woman, what is she, the whiche semeth as it were one blinde and madde: and standeth vpon a rounde stone? She is called, quod he, Fortune, she is nat only blinde, but also madde and deyffe. What doth she? She walkethe euery where, quod he, and from some she taketh ryches: to some other she gyuethe: and from them by and by she taketh agayne that / that she gaue them before, and deliuereth it to some other, bothe without cause / without aduisement / and inconstantly. And therfore that token declarethe well hir nature. What token is that,

¶ I, that ſhe ſtandeth vpon a rounde ſtone: what betokeneth that? Mary that hir giftes be both vncertayne and vnſtable. Wherfore they that truſte vnto hir / ſuffre ſharpe and greuous troubles. But what meaneth the great company that ſtande aboute hir / and what be they called? Certaynely they be called folke without iugement or conſyderation. For euery one of them dothe aſke thoſe thynges / that be bothe tranſitorie and vaniſhyng. wherfore than do they nat loke all alyke / but ſome of them do ſeme to reioyce / and ſome of them be ſorowfulle / heuye / and caſtynge abrode theyr handes? Thoſe whiche ſeme, quod he, to reioyce and laughe, be of them, the whiche haue receiued ſomwhat of Fortune, and thoſe cal hir good Fortune: But thoſe / whiche ſeme to wepe and caſt out theyr handes / be of them / from whom ſhe hath taken that / the whiche ſhe gaue them before: And thoſe cal hir yl Fortune. what thinges be thoſe than, the which ſhe gyueth them / ſeinge that the receyuers reioyce ſo moche in receyuynge of them, and the loſers do ſo moche drowpe and mourne for the loſſe of them? Thoſe thynges, quod he, the whiche many folkes calle goodes. Ye but whiche be they? Ryches, quod he,

and

and glorye / and nobilite / and childzen / and lordshyp / and kyngdomes / and other suche like. Why be nat those thinges good in deder As of that, q he, we shall dispute an other tyme : but nowe let vs go forthe with this talke. We it so.

Se ye nat than / after ye haue passed this gate, an other higher Compace / and women standyng without the same circute apointed lyke harlottes? Ye very well. The one of those is called Incontinence / an other Riot, an other Couetyse / an other Flaterie. Why do they thā stande here? They awayt deuly vpon them / the whiche haue receyued any thynge of Fortune. What than? Than they skyppe forthe and imbrace them, and flater and pray them to abyde with them, seyinge, that they so doinge / shal haue a pleasant life without any labour, grefe, or trouble. Than if any of them be perswaded by those womē to entre in to pleasure, so longe as that conuersation tickleth and deliteth hym, so longe he shal thynke it swete, but afterwarde it is not so. For as soone as he calleth hym selfe home / he shal wel perceiue / that he hath not eaten pleasure / but that he hath ben by pleasure both eaten and wronged. For whan he hath consumed all that Fortune gaue hym /

he is compelled to be those womens slaue / and to suffre all thynges, and to be fylthy / and for their sakes to leue none vngracious dede vndone : As to take mens goodes frō them / to cōmitte sacrilege / to forswere and periure them selfe / to betraye / to robbe and roue / and to do all other suche lyke mischeuous dedes : But whan al thynges do fayle them / than are they deliuered to Peyne and Tourment. What peyne & tourmēt is that ? Seest thou nat behynde yonder women, q he, as it were a litteł mouthe of a caaue, and a certayne strayte & a darke place : and also there semethe to be women foule and slutysshe, and theyr clothes all baudy, ragged, and beggerly ? I se it well. Of these, quod he, she that hath the whyppe in hir hande, is called Punisshemēt, She that hath hir heed betwene hir knees, is Heuynes : She that pluckethe hir owne heare, is Sorowe. But what misshapen, leane, and naked felowe is he, that standeth by them : and also an other foule & leane woman lyke vnto hym ? The man is called, quod he, Waylynge, and she his syster is called Skuggysshenes or lacke of corage. And so to those persones he is deliuered, and with them he lyueth in cōtinual tourment. Than agayne from hence he is

thro-

throwen in to an other house of yuell hap: and there he passeth forth the rest of his life in al myserie and wretchednes, excepte Repentance come to hym from Fortune. Why, what shall he do? Mary if Repentaunce come to hym, she delyuereth hym from al yuels: & imprinteth in hym / an other opinion and desyre, that shulde leade hym to trewe lerning / and also to that, the which is called the vntrewe lernynge. Than what is done more? If he receyue, quod he, the opinion / the whiche gydeth hym to trewe lernynge / by that he is purged: and made safe and blessed / and shall be happy al his lyfe after, except he be againe deceiued by false opinio. O good lorde, what an other great peryl is this? But what maner of thynge, quod I, is the vntrewe lernynge? Seeste thou nat ponder other Compasse? Very well, quod I. Also without the circute about the entre, there standeth a woman, the whiche semeth to be very nette, and pure, and to be wel mannered. I se hir very well. Her, q he, many folysshe folke call lernynge, but she is none other in dede / than vntrewe lernynge. And whan they, that are holly made safe / wyll auance them selfe to trewe lernynge / they come hyther first. Is ther than none other

way

waye but this, to come to trewe kernynge? Yes, quod he. But those folkes within the circute that go downewarde, what be they? Those be, quod he, the louers of vntrewe kernynge, men deceyued, and wenynge that they be very familier with trewe kernynge. What be they called? Some poetis, quod he, some orators / some logiciens, some musiciens / some arithmetriciens / some geometriciens / some Astronomers / some of Epicurs secte / some of the Peripatetike secte / some of the secte Critike / and al other suche lyke. The women, the which seme to ronne aboute, lyke to those we sawe first, amonge whom thou dyddest say, there was Incontinence, and other with them, what be they? The selfe same, quod he: Why come they in hither than? Yea by Jupiter euen hither: but that is seldome, & nat as they do in the fyrst compasse. And what, be nat those opinions lyke wyse? Yes, quod he. More ouer there remaineth in these folke the dranghte that they dranke of Deceite bothe Ignorance, and with her also folisshenes. And they shal neuer be delyuered of opinion, nor of other malice, tyl suche tyme as they haue forgotten the vntrewe kernynge, and be entred in to the trewe way, and drynke there a

purgyng

purgyng vertue, and caſt away all the puels they had before, both opinions, Ignorance, and all other vngratiouſnes. Than vnder this facion they ſhall be made holle. But theſe, the whiche remayne ſtylle with falſe lerning, ſhal neuer be quitte of their nought-tines: Nor they ſhal neuer be without ſome puel, for theſe ſtudies ſake. But whiche is this waye, that leadeth a man to trewe lernynge? Seeſt thou, quod he, yonder aboue, a place/in the whiche no body dwelleth, but it ſemeth to be deſerte? I ſe hit. More ouer there is a lyttell gate, and a way before the gate, the whiche is nat very moche haunted, very fewe folke vſe hit / for bycauſe hit ſemeth harde to clyme to hit: and hit is bothe rough and ſtony? I ſe it very well, quod I. There appereth alſo a littel high hylle/and the aſcendynge vp is very ſtrayte/ and hath depe pitchlynges here and there/ where one may lyghtly falle downe headlynge? I ſe it. This is the way, quod he, that leadeth vnto trewe lernynge: and trewely to loke to, it ſemeth an vneaſie way. Seeſt thou nat alſo aboue aboute the hylle top a great high ſtone, very ſtype vp on euery ſyde? I ſe it, quod I. Seeſt thou alſo two goodly women ſtā-dynge vpon the ſtone with good proportion

of

of bodye, and howe they put forthe theyr handes redy & gladly. I se them, but howe, & I, be they called? The one, quod he, is called Continence / the other Sufferaunce, they be sisters. Why put they out their handes so gladly? They do, quod he, exhorte the cōmers towarde that place to trust, and not to feare, tellynge them they must take a litteli pacience & suffre a littel whyle more, and than they shal come in to the good way. Tell me this, whan they come to the stone, howe gette they vp theron, for I se no way, that bryngeth them vp? These womē come downe from the stepe clyffes, and drawe them vp: and there they bydde them reste: and within a whyle after they gyue them strength, corage, and boldenes: and they promise to stablisshe them in trewe lerning: and they shewe them the waye, howe faire, playne, and passable it is, and pure and clene frō al lettes or stoppes, as thou seest. They shewe them in dede. Seest thou not also, quod he, before this same wodde a certaine place, the which semeth to be very feyre, somwhat lyke a meddowe, and shynynge with mocke lyghte and bryghtnes? Very well. Doest thou also take hede in the middes of the meddowe of an other compasse / and an other

gate?

gate ? Jt is ſo, but what is this place cal-
led ? The habitation of bleſſed folke, quod
he, For here dwelle al vertues and felicitie.
Jt muſt nedes thā be a fayre place, quod J.
Than thou ſeeſt at the gate a certayne wo-
man, the whiche is very fayre, and of a con-
ſtant face and behauour, in hir myddell and
luſty age, and hauyng hir apparel and gar-
mentes ſimple : She ſtandethe nat vpon a
rounde ſtone, but on a ſquare, ſurely ſet and
fixed : and with hir there be two other, they
ſeme to be hir doughters ? Jt appereth ſo.
Of theſe, the myddelmoſt is Lernynge, the
other Trouthe / the other Perſwaſion.
But why ſtādeth this woman vpon a ſquare
ſtone ? Jt is a token, quod he, that the way,
that leadethe folke to hir, is to them bothe
firme and ſure : and the gifte of thoſe thyn-
ges, that ſhe gyuethe, is to the receyuers
ſure and ſtable. And what thinges be they,
that ſhe gyueth ? Boldnes and Aſſurednes
without feare, quod he. What be they ?
Knowlege, quod he, to ſuffre nothyng gre-
ouſly in this lyfe. By god, quod J, theſe
be goodly gyftes : But why ſtandeth ſhe ſo
without the compaſſe ? To thentent, quod
he, ſhe may heale thoſe, the whiche come thi-
ther, & maketh them to drynke a purgation.

Whan

whan they be pourged, from thens she bryn gethe them in to the vertues. Howe is this, quod I, I vnderstande it not welle yet. But thou shalte vnderstande it, quod he. In lyke wyse as if a man, the whiche is very sycke, cometh to a phisition, the phisition doth first by purgation expelle al those thynges, that caused the syckenes: And so after restoreth the pacient to his recouerie and helth again. If the pacient do not obey to those thinges, the which the phisition cõmandeth he shuld, not without a cause he is cast vp of the phisition/and so vndone by the sickenes. This I vnderstande, quod I. Euen in the same maner, quod he, hit is, whan a man cometh to Lernynge, she curethe hym, and makethe hym drinke hir vertue, fyrst to pourge him, and to cast away al the yuels, the whiche he had, whan he came to hir. What be those? Ignorance & Errour, the whiche he dranke of Decepte, and pryde also and arrogance, concupiscence, intemperance, furie, couetousnes, and all other, with whiche he was replenisshed in the first compasse. Than whan he is purged, whyther doth she sende hym? In, quod he, to knowlege and to other vertues. To what vertues? Dost thou not se, quod he, within the gate, a cõpany of womẽ,

the

the whiche seme to be of good disposition and well ordred, haynge theyr apparel not gay, but symple, nor they be nat so trymme, nor so pickedly attyred, as thother be: I se them, quod I, but what be they called: The fyrste, quod he, is called Knowlege / the other be hir sisters, Strength of minde, Justice, Goodnes, Temperāce, Soburnes, Liberalite, Continence, and Mekenes. O these be marueylous goodlye, quod I: In howe great an hope be we nowe: Yea if ye understande, quod he, and wyl rote in you by practise those thinges, the whiche you here. We shal assay as diligently as we can, quod I. Than you shall be safe, quod he.

Whan these women haue receyued one / whyther do they bryng hym: To theyr mother, quod he. Who is she: Felicitee, q he. Who is that: Thou seest the waye / that gothe vp to that high place, the whiche is the toppe of al the other compasses: I se it. There is also in the porche a womā of a good grace a fauour, and sytteth in an high throne, dressed gentyl womanlyke, and nat to trymme, corroned with a very fayre and flory shyng garlāde: She semeth to be so. The same is Felicite, quod he. Whan one cometh thither / what dothe he there: Feli-

cite, quod he, with hir power crowneth him, and so do al the other vertues like wise, as a man the whiche hath ouercome marueilous great batayles. What batailes hath he ouercome, quod I? Very great, quod he, and great wylde beastis / the whiche afore dyd deuoure and vexe hym / and made hym their slaue / al these hath he ouercome / & expelled from hym: and nowe he is lorde ouer hym selfe. wherfore nowe they serue him: as he dyd them before. I wolde gladly knowe / whiche be those wylde beastis thou speakest of? First, quod he, Ignorance and Deceite, do nat these seme to the wylde beastis? Ye and very yl wylde beastis, q I. Secondly, Sorowe / waylynge / Couetousnes / Intemperance / and all other mischiefe: all those he doth nowe rule / and is not gouerned nor commaunded by them as he was before.

O, quod I, these be goodly actes & dedes / and a victorie mooste goodly: but telle me this / what is the power and vertue of the corone / with the whiche she coroneth hym? It is, ponge man, a Vertue and a myghte / that maketh a man welfull. For he that is coroned with this power & Vertue, is made therby happy and welfull / and hath not the trust nor hope of his felicite in other thinges,

than

than in him selfe. O what a goodly victorye telleſt thou. But whan he is coroned/ what dothe he, or whyther gothe he? The Vertues take hym / and leade hym thyther/ whence he came before, & shewe hym howe yuell and howe wretchedly they lyue, the whiche dwelle styl there/ and in what great danger and perylle they lyue/and howe they erre and wander, and are ledde, as it were by their ennemies: Some by Intēperance, some by Pryde/some by Couetousnes/some by Dayne glorye/and some by other yuels, from the whiche myschiefes, to whom they were bounde/they can not vnlose them selfe/ to come hyther to be made holle: but lyue in trouble al theyr lyfe: This they suffre, by cause they can not fynde the waye / that wolde brynge them hyther. For they haue forgoten that that was cōmanded them by Genius. Me semethe thou sayeſt trouthe/ but yet in this I doubte agayne. Why do the Vertues shewe hym the place, frō whēce he cam fyrſt? He dyd not throughly know/ yf he, nor vnderstode any of those thynges/ that were there, but he was in doubte. And throughe Ignorraunce and Errour, that he drāke/he estemed those thinges to be good/ whiche were not good: and those thynges/

to be yuel, whirh is nat yuel: And therfore he hym selfe lyued noughtyly, as the other do, that there dwelle and abyde. Nowe he hath atteyned knowlege of all profitable thynges, he hym selfe lyueth wel, and doth beholde other, the whiche lyue yuel. Whan he hath loked ouer all, what dothe he, or whyther goth he? whyther so euer he wyl, quod he. For euery where he is in suertie / as he that dwelleth in the dene of Coryeus. And whither so euer he gothe, in al thynges he shall lyue well, with all suertie: And enery body shall receyue hym gladly, as the sicke folkes do the phisition. But doth not he yet feare those women, the whiche thou dyddest cal beastis, lest he shulde suffre somwhat of them? Nothyng at al. He nothing shall be troubled with Sorowe, nor with Heuynes, nor with Intemperance, nor with Couetyse, nor with Pouerte, nor with any other yuell. For he shal be lorde ouer them all: and be safe from all those thynges, the whiche before dyd hurte or trouble hym, as they be / that are bitten with a serpent called Vipera. For without doubte wylde bestis, the whiche hurte all other folke to the deth, wyl not hurte nor trouble them, for bicause they haue by this bytyng a remedy to resiste

all

all other: So in lyke wyse nothynge troubleth this man, bycause he hath a remedye preſent. Me ſemeth thou ſayeſt very wel: but yet tel me this, what be they, the whiche ſeme to come yonder from the hyll. Of the whiche theſe that be crowned, ſeme to reioyce and be mery: and thoſe that be vncrowned, as hit were men in diſpayre, ſeme to knocke theyr heedes and legges: they are alſo withholde by certayne women. Thoſe that be crowned be they, the whiche are made ſafe by lernynge, and they reioyce, that they haue atteyned hir: But thoſe that be vncrowned are they, whiche by cauſe they dyd diſpeire, came awaye from lernynge, made therby yuell and wretched: but yet thoſe without feare wente to Sufferaunce, and thens turned backe ayene, and erred, and myſſed the waye. But the women that folowe after them, what be they? Heuynes, quod he, and Sorowes, and Vexations and Shames, and Ignorancis. And it be, as thou ſayſt, al the yuels in the worlde folowe them. It is treawe by Jupiter, quod he, that they folowe them. Whan theſe folke are come agayne to the fyrſte compaſſe / to Luſte and Incontinence, they do nat accuſe them ſelfe, but ſtreyghte they ſpeake yuell

bothe of lernyng/and also of them that go to hir: sayenge, that those are wretched/ miserable/and vnhappy/the whiche leauing the lyfe that they haue/ do lyue yuell/ and haue not the fruition nor vse of those good thinges, that they haue. what do they call good thynges? Riotte and Intemperance to speke shortly. For, for to eate and drinke lyke beastis, they esteme to be the fruition of the best thynges in this worlde. But the other women, the whiche go thyther merye and laughyng, what be they called? Opinions, quod he, the whiche after they haue brought folke to lernyng, and that they be gone in to the vertues, they go theyr wayes to fetche other, and to shewe/that those are made happye and welfull, the whiche they brought before. But do not, quod I, those opinions come in to the vertues? No, quod he. For Opinion may nat come in to knowlege: but Opinions deliuer them that come vnto lernynge. And whan lernynge hath ones receiued them, than do these Opinions go backe agayne to fetche other, lyke as shippis that are discharged of their frought go agayne and are fylled with other stuffe. These thinges me semeth, quod I, thou hast very well expounded: but yet thou haste not

declared

declared vnto vs, what Genius dothe commande the entrers in to lyfe to do. To truste wel and haue good corage, quod he, & therfore haue ye good corage. For I wyll eyppowne all, & leaue nothynge. Thou sayst wel, quod I.

Than he putte forthe his hande agayne. Ye se, quod he, the woman, whiche semethe to be blinde, & to stande vpō a rounde stone, The whiche I tolde you euen nowe, is calked Fortune: we se hir. Genius cōmandeth, quod he, that folke shulde not truste this woman, nor beleue that any thynge that a body dothe receyue of hir, is eyther firme and stable, or may haue and kepe hit sure & safely: nor to esteme it as his owne. For nothynge can let hir to take away those thynges agayne, and to delyuer them to some other body: And she is wont often so to do. And for this cause Genius doth cōmande, that hir giftis shulde be lytel set by: And nother to reioyce, whan she giueth the: nor to be sory, whan she taketh them away: and nother to dispraise nor to prayse hir. For she dothe nothynge by reason, but all thynges rashely without aduisement, and as it happeneth, as I haue tolde you before. For these considerations he commaundeth, that folke shulde not esteme, nor haue in ad-

miration that/the whiche she doth. Nor to be lyke the yuell marchantes bankers. For they, whan they haue receyued money of a man, do reioyce, and thynke it is their owne: but whan it is asked them agayne / they are miscontent, and thinke they be yuel handled, and do not remembre, that they dyd receiue, that that was truste in theyr hades / for this entent, that whan so euer the owner lyste / there shulde be none obstable, but that he myght take it awaye agayne. Under suche maner Genius commandeth folke nat to be affectionate to Fortunes gyftes, and to remembre, that she hath suche a nature to take awaye and to transferre those thynges she gaue / and by and by agayne to gyue manyfolde thynges. Some tyme also she dothe not onely take away those thynges she gaue alone / but also those thinges that were had before. Therfore Genius commandeth to take of those thynges she gyueth / and he that hath them to go his way shortly to the ferme and sure gyfte. What gyfte is that, quod I? The gyfte that folke take of Lernynge / if they be made holke there. Yea and what is that? The trewe knowlege, that he, of profitable thinges, both a sure, & a stable, and an immutable gyfte. Wore ouer he co-

mandeth

mandeth to flee faste towarde this Knowlege. And whan they come to those women, the whiche as I saide before, are called Incontinence and Pleasure, he commaundeth them not to truste those women in any wise, nor to tary tyll they come to Vntrewe Lernyng: There he commandeth them to tary a while and abyde, and to take what so euer they wil of her, as a helpe or ayde to a further iourney. Than from thence to go anone to trewe Lernyng. These be the thynges, that Genius cōmaundeth. Who so euer besyde these thynges, eyther doth any thynge/ or mysbereth any thynge/ doth nought lyke hym selfe perisshe noughtyly.

So nowe frendes the storye, that is in the table, is suche as I haue tolde you. Yet if ye lyste to enquire of any of these thynges particularly, without disdayne I shall telle it to you. Thou sayste welt, quod I. But what doth Genius commande them to take of vntrewe Lernyng? Those thinges that are worthy and mete to be vsed & occupied. What be those? Letters, ꝙ he, & other sciences, the whiche, Plato sayth, are to yōge folke in stede of a Wrydle, to reine them frō turnyng to other thynges. But whether is it necessary for a body, if he wil go to trewe

Lernyng, to take those thynges or no? Necessite truely, quod he, there is none. Yet neuertheles they be profytable, but to make folke the better / therto can they nothynge helpe. Thou sayst than / that these thinges be not so profitable, that by them men may be made better, for without them a body may come to goodnes. Yet neuertheles they be not vnprofytable. If I haue perceyned you well, ye meane this / that without the knowlege of those liberal sciences, men may atteyne to vertue and goodnes: in lyke maner as we may vnderstande a thinge spoken in a strange langage / without the knowlege of that same tonge, by a spokesman, that can interprete hit vnto vs. Yet neuer theles, hit were not vnprofitable for vs, to vnderstande our selfe the langage / in the whiche it was fyrste spoken in. Haue not men, lerned in these sciences, preeminence to be better than other men? Howe can they excell or haue preeminence, whan men may se them deceyued in the opinion of good & yuell / as other folke be: and also bounde and tangled with all vngratiousnes? For knowlege of letters, nor vnderstanding of other sciences do nothynge lette / but that a body may be also dronke, intemperate, couetous / vniuste, a

tray-

traytour / & finally a foole. For soth a man may se many suche. Than howe, quod he, haue they preeminence, by reason of those sciences / to be made the better men: it semeth nat by this reason. But what, q I, is the cause: Bycause, quod he, they dwell styl in the seconde Compasse, as it were men approchynge towarde true lernynge. And what helpeth that, q I, whan we maye se many tymes / they come out of the fyrst compasse from Incontinence and other vngracyousnes, to the thyrde compasse / to trewe lernyng, the whiche do passe by these lerned men. And how can men lerned only in these liberall sciences excell other, whan they be more obstinate, & more vnable to be taught, than other folke be? Howe is that, q I: For, quod he, in the seconde Compasse that thynge that they knowe not / they do feyne thē selfe to knowe, if there were none other thinge but this, as longe as they haue this opinion / they must nedes be vnable to be stirred to come to trewe lernynge. More oner, seest thou nat an other thynge, that the opinions out of the first cōpasse, come also in to thē: wherfore these be no whitte better, thā those of the first cōpasse: except they do repente, & be perswaded that they haue not

the

the true Knowlege, but the vntrue Lerning, by whom they be deceiued. And thinke, that as longe as they remayne in the contrarie opinion / that they can neuer be made safe & holle. Nor you nother frendes / excepte you so do, and that these sayenges remayne stedfastly in your remembraunce / tyll suche time as ye haue ingēdred in you by practise / an habite or custome. Wherfore ye muste consydre these sayenges cōtinually / and not by startis, and thynke al other thynges pertayne nothynge to your purpose. If ye do not so, of these thynges, that ye haue nowe harde / ye shal haue no profite, We shal do / as ye teache vs: But expoune this vnto vs. Why be not those thinges / the whiche folke do receyne of Fortune, good thynges? as to lyue, to be holle, to be ryche, to haue glorie, to haue children, to conquere and ouercome, and all other thynges lyke these? Or agayne, why be not theyr contrarves yuel? For thy sayenge semeth to vs increedible / and verye farre frome our opinion. Come of, quod he than, and endeuoir your selfe to answere, as ye thinke beste, to those thinges, the whiche I shal aske you. That shal I do, q I. Than, q he, if a body lyue yuel / is it good to hym to lyue? I thynke

no,

no, but rather yuel, ꝙ I. For howe, ꝙ he, can it be good to liue / whan it is to the liuer yuell? Certaynly, quod I, to them / the whiche lyue nought / me thynketh lyfe is an yuell thynge: but to them / the whiche lyue wel / lyfe is a good thyng. Than, quod he, thou sayste / that lyfe is both a good thinge / and an yuel. Ye treuly. Speke not so incredibly and so farre out of the waye: For it is impossible / one thynge to be bothe good and yuel. For so the selfe same thyng shuld be bothe profytable and noysome. And one selfe thynge alwaye to be worthye to be elected / and at the same one tyme also to be eschewed: me thynkethe this farre from reason. But howe foloweth it / that though that yuell be in hym that lyueth yuell / that therfore lyfe selfe shulde be an yuel thyng? But, quod he, it is not al one / to lyue / and to lyue yuell. Dothe it not seme also / so to the? Yes. For I do nat thynke them both one. Than life selfe, quod he, is not an yuel thynge. For if it were an yuel thyng / than they, the whiche do lyue wel, had in them an yuel thyng. For they haue in them lyfe, the whiche were an yuel thynge. Me semeth ye say trouthe: for bycause that lyfe happeneth to both / as wel to the lyuers wel / as to the

lyuers

lyuers yuel. Therfore lyfe can nother be a good thing, nor an yuel. No more than cuttyng or sering is in thē, whiche are diseased, eyther a sicke thynge or a holle. Consydre than this, whether had ye leuer to liue yuel, or to dye well and nobully? I had rather, quod I, to dye wel. Than, to dye it is none yuel thynge, seinge that many tymes deth is rather to be chosen than life. It is so. The selfe same reason may be made of helth and sickenes. For often tymes hit is not profitable to be in helthe, but the contrarye is to be preferred. Suche circumstances there maye be, thou sayste trouthe. Come of nowe than let vs consydre in lyke maner of ryches. May we not se (as it chauncethe often to se) a man to haue moche riches, and yet to lyue noughte and wretchedly? Yea very many of that sorte. Than ryches helpeth nothynge these men to lyue well? It semeth so: For they them selfe be noughte. Than ryches causethe not men to be good / but that dothe high and perfecte knowlege. Your sayenge semeth trewe. Than by this reason howe can Ryches be a good thynge / whan it helpeth not to make his possessours to be better. Me semethe ye saye trouthe. And to some folke also it is not profitable

to

to be ryche / if they knowe not howe to vse ryches. It is trewe. Howe can that thyng be iuged good of any man, the whiche it is no profette to haue? It can not. Therfore if a man knowe howe to vse riches wel, and as it shulde be, he shal lyue wel: If he can not / he shal lyue noughtyly. There can no thynge be trewer than this. And for a fynall conclusion, to repute and esteme these thinges, as though they were good thinges, or els reiecte or despise the same / as yuell thynges, is the cause, that vexeth or troubleth the moste parte of people: whan they honour these forsayde thynges / and thynke by them onely to obtayne felicite and welefulnes. For, for to gete them, they leaue nothyng vndone, be it neuer so vngratious. Al these thinges they do only bycause they knowe not, what is the trewe goodnes.

¶ Thus endeth the table of Cebes, Imprinted at London in Fletestrete by Thomas Berthelet printer to the kynges moste noble grace. Cum priuilegio.